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Florida Playbook

Matt Dixon and Gary Fineout's must-read briefing on what's hot, crazy or shady about politics in the Sunshine State

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Parkland, a year later — DeSantis has grand jury probe Broward schools — More indigenous than Warren: Rubio — Another Florida mayor eyeing 2020?

By MARC CAPUTO, MATT DIXON and ISABEL DOBRIN | 02/14/2019 06:55 AM EST

Presented by Floridians for Reproductive Freedom

So we're not going to say good morning the way we normally do. It is Thursday, Feb. 14. It's not Valentine's Day for so many as it is a gruesome anniversary. Remember them:

THE MURDERED: Luke Hoyer, Martin Duque-Anquiano, Gina Mantalto, Alexander Schachter, Alaina Petty, Alyssa Alhadeff, Nicholas Dworet, Helena Ramsay, Christopher Hixon, Carmen Schentrup, Aaron Feis, Scott Biegel, Meadow Pollock, Cara Loughran, Joaquin Oliver, Paday, Jaime Cuttenberg and Peter

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William Olson, Kheshava Managapuram, Justin Colton, Alexander Dworet, Genesis Valentin, Daniela Menescal, Samantha Grady, Samantha Fuentes, Isabel Chequer, Samantha Mayor, Benjamin Wikander, Madeleine Wilford, Marion

Kabachenko, Stacey Lippel, Anthony Borges and Kyle Laman.

THE DIVISIONS — “Their anguish was a defining image of Parkland. Now they don’t talk to each other,” by AP’s Kelli Kennedy: “It’s an image that has become emblematic of the Parkland school massacre: two terrified moms outside Marjory Stoneman Douglas High, one of them a tall, weeping blonde with the black smudge of Ash Wednesday on her forehead, the other a petite redhead crying in despair on her shoulder. But the bond in that widely seen photograph didn’t survive long. The two women soon found themselves at odds — like the nation itself — over gun control.” [Read more](#)

THIS IS NOT HOW THIS IS SUPPOSED TO WORK — “\$5 million in school ‘guardian’ money used for gun equipment, staff, benefits,” by News Service of Florida’s Ana Ceballos: [Read more](#)

FLASHBACK — “Schools’ culture of tolerance lets students like Nikolas Cruz slide,” by Sun Sentinel’s Megan O’Matz and Scott Travis: [Read more](#)

COMING NEXT? — “Arming teachers was a non-starter in Florida. But that was last year,” by Bradenton Herald’s Tiffany Tompkins: [Read more](#)

THE TOLL — “In post-Parkland Florida, young people are still dying from gun violence,” by Miami Herald’s Amy Driscoll and Caitlin Ostroff: [Read more](#)

THE ROLE — “At MSD one year later, an uneasy hero is still guiding students forward,” by Sun Sentinel’s Ben Crandell: [Read more](#)

THE OVERVIEW — “Here is every new gun law in the U.S. since the Parkland shooting,” by AP and Steve Contorno: [Read more](#)

THE FALLOUT — “Hearing delayed on Parkland dad’s conflict with ex-monitor,” by AP: [Read more](#)

THE OTHER MASSACRE — “Prosecutor: No Pulse clubgoers hit by officers’ bullets,” by AP’s Mike Schneider: “More than two-and-a-half years after 49 people were massacred at a gay nightclub in Florida, a prosecutor said Wednesday that no clubgoers were hit by responding officers’ bullets and each time responding officers fired their weapons was reasonable and justified. State Attorney Aramis Ayala said at a news conference that she had issued letters of clearance to the 14 law enforcement officers who fired more than 180 shots during a more than three-hour standoff with gunman Omar Mateen at the Orlando’s

Pulse nightclub in June 2016. Mateen pledged allegiance to the Islamic State group.” [Read more](#)

WE TOLD YA SO — Wednesday morning, we told you Gov. Ron DeSantis might launch an investigation into Broward schools, and he essentially did just that by [petitioning](#) the state Supreme Court for a statewide grand jury to examine school security issues. Will the grand jury report, which is to be submitted in a year’s time, be used to suspend some Broward school board members? It’s too early to say. But for the Parkland parents who want Superintendent Robert Runcie gone, this is comforting news.

ANOTHER ONE — “**DeSantis seeks grand jury review of Parkland shooting response,**” by POLITICO Florida’s Andrew Atterbury: Gov. Ron Desantis has petitioned the Florida Supreme Court to enlist a grand jury to review the response to last year’s shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School. Speaking in Broward County alongside Parkland parents on the eve of the shooting’s anniversary, Desantis said his administration would investigate any crime or wrongdoing associated with school security and safety. [Read more](#)

... 2020 VISION ...

HERE COMES HARRIS — Sen. Kamala Harris’s presidential campaign announced her first campaign fundraising tour through Palm Beach, Broward and Miami-Dade counties March 10 and 11. No more info is available. The California senator is likely tapping the donor network mined by her new Southern regional finance director, Stefanie Sass, who was deputy finance director for Sen. Bill Nelson’s unsuccessful reelection campaign last year and, before that, was a fundraiser for then-Rep. Joe Garcia.

WHO? — “**A Florida Mayor is thinking about running for resident and it’s not Andrew Gillum,**” by BuzzFeed’s Ryan C. Brooks: A virtually unheard-of mayor in Florida is seriously considering running for president, and he’s getting help from former staffers who helped launched former Tallahassee mayor Andrew Gillum’s campaign for governor. Wayne Messam, 44, is the owner of a construction firm and serves as the mostly ceremonial mayor of Miramar, a South Florida city of 140,000. He told BuzzFeed News that while he’s largely focused on his mayoral reelection campaign, he’s seriously started considering launching a presidential campaign. [Read more](#)

...TRUMLANDIA AND THE SWAMP...

MIAMI-ZUELA — “**Trump to talk about Venezuela on Monday at Florida International University,**” by Miami Herald’s David Smiley And Franco Ordoñez: “Trump is scheduled to speak at Florida International

University, where he'll reaffirm his support for Guaidó and, according to the White House, hammer socialism as a scourge. The president will deliver his address at the university's Modesto A. Maidique campus in Sweetwater, which is immediately south of Doral, home to the largest concentration of Venezuelans in the U.S." [Read more](#)

— **"Trump preps Venezuela aid package amid push to oust Maduro,"** by POLITICO's Nancy Cook, Andrew Restuccia, and Eliana Johnson: The Trump administration is strongly considering sending millions of dollars in additional humanitarian aid to Venezuela, according to three U.S. officials, as the country grapples with a mounting political crisis and its citizens face widespread food shortages. [Read more](#)

NATIVE SON — "Marco Rubio Is More Native American Than Elizabeth Warren," by Daily Caller's Matt M. Miller: "Republican Florida Sen. Marco according to the PBS show 'Finding Your Roots.' By comparison, Democratic Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren's recent DNA test showed that she is only between 0.1 percent to 1.5 percent Native American, despite her history of claiming Native American heritage throughout her career." [Read more](#)

GAMBLING IN CASABLANCA — "Marco Rubio just went off on corporate stock buybacks," by Tampa Bay Times' Steve Contorno: "Sen. Marco Rubio unleashed a Twitter rant on stock buybacks that you might expect from Bernie Sanders or Elizabeth Warren, but not necessarily the Florida Republican. Last year saw a record \$1.1 trillion in stock buybacks, the common term for when a company buys back its own stock from the marketplace. Of course, the precursor for this was Republican tax bill championed by President Donald Trump, which Rubio voted for." [Read more](#)

MUELLER TIME — "Roger Stone in Boca: 'I'm being targeted because I supported Donald Trump,'" by Palm Beach Post's Christine Stapleton and George Bennett: "Shortly after Roger Stone's attorneys lobbed a contempt accusation in U.S. District Court against special counsel Robert Mueller's office on Wednesday, Stone pressed his case in the court of public opinion west of Boca Raton. Stone, a longtime adviser to President Donald Trump, told a Gold Coast Tiger Bay Club luncheon crowd of about 100 that he's innocent of the 'non-violent process crimes' he's charged with. He criticized his pre-dawn arrest on Jan. 25 as an effort to prejudice public opinion against him and he made several pitches for his legal defense fund." [Read more](#)

— **"Roger Stone's wife promotes anti-CNN conspiracy theory to fundraise for husband "** by Washington Post's Erik Wemple: [Read more](#)

murderer for husband, by Washington Post's Erik Lipton. [Read more](#)

BECAUSE IRS — “A Tampa man reported an income of \$18,497. The IRS sent him a refund check for \$980,000,” by Tampa Bay Times’ Susan Taylor Martin: “At a time when millions of Americans are bemoaning their smaller-than-expected tax refunds, consider this: Ramon Christopher Blanchett of Tampa once got a refund of \$980,000. On a reported income of \$18,497. As with most things involving the IRS, this story does not end happily, at least for Blanchett, 29. But it does display a degree of ingenuity, as outlined in a [more](#)

...TRAIL MIX...

DeSANTIS RISING — “FAU poll: High marks for DeSantis, net negatives for Trump, Pelosi,” by Palm Beach Post's George Bennett: “New Gov. Ron DeSantis gets high marks for his focus on combating Florida’s algae problem and eliminating Common Core education standards while voters in America’s largest swing state narrowly disapprove of both President Donald Trump and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, according to a new Florida Atlantic University poll. The poll of 500 registered voters, conducted last Thursday through Saturday with a 4.3 percent margin of error, shows 48 percent approval for DeSantis’ first month on the job and 18 percent disapproval.” [Read more](#)

... DATELINE TALLAHASSEE ...

STILL-COMMON CORE — “Ron DeSantis’ Common Core plans won’t halt Pasco textbook purchase,” by Tampa Bay Times’ Jeffrey S. Solochek: “Floridians appear to love Gov. Ron DeSantis’ proposal to get the Common Core out of the public schools. A newly released Florida Atlantic University survey shows 52 percent support for the idea, compared to just 21 percent opposition. That makes the Common Core stance DeSantis’ second most popular position, behind only his creation of a task force to deal with Red Tide.” [Read more](#)

...PENINSULA AND BEYOND...

COMMISSIONER BADASS — “Two men pulled over a county commissioner. Except they weren’t cops, the real police say,” by Miami Herald’s David J. Neal, Charles Rabin and Douglas Hanks: “Two men impersonating police officers tried to pull over the wrong guy Wednesday: Miami-Dade Commissioner Joe Martinez — a former decorated Miami-Dade cop. The men were taken into custody after Martinez said he became suspicious of the vehicle’s flashing lights, refused to pull over and flagged down a squad car he was passing on the highway. ‘He picked the wrong guy,’ the commissioner said. ‘I’m

glad it was me.” [Read more](#)

DUH — “Miami named one of the most corrupt cities nationwide,” by **Sun Sentinel’s Johnny Diaz:** “Bribery, embezzlement and fraud. Miami has it all but it’s not the most corrupt city in the country. The Magic City is No. 4. That’s according to the ‘Corruption in Chicago and Illinois’ report released Monday by the University of Illinois at Chicago which looked at the biggest corrupt cities nationally.” [Read more](#)

WHITE PEOPLE PROBLEMS — “A mayoral showdown in an enclave of millionaires: The Gentrifier vs. the Gentrified,” by **Miami Herald’s Sarah Blaskey:** “Next Tuesday, the residents of one of South Florida’s most wealthy enclaves will have an opportunity to elect a new mayor for the first time in over a decade. In Golden Beach, 600 or so registered voters will choose between seven-term Mayor Glenn Singer, who has run unopposed since he was first elected in 2005, and lifelong resident Barbara Shaheen, who says Singer’s administration is trying to get rid of older residents who don’t fit the vision for the ever-more exclusive town.” [Read more](#)

...ODDS, ENDS, AND FLORIDA MEN...

— **“Firefighter after co-workers charged for penis drawings, noose: Speak up and say enough,”** by **Miami Herald’s Emily Michot:** [Read more](#)

— **“The spring breakers are coming! And they’re coming to Fort Lauderdale in high numbers,”** by **Sun Sentinel’s David Selig:** [Read more](#)

— **“Florida woman shaves legs while riding on motorcycle,”** by **Fox News’ Dom Caliccio:** [Read more](#)

INSTA-BY-THE-GRAM — “Miami Is the Number One Thirst Trap City in America,” by **New Times’ Ciara Lavelle:** “Is your Instagram feed full of abs and cleavage? You must be from Miami. That, at least, is the takeaway of a new study of provocative online photos titled ‘Thirst Trap USA.’ Commissioned by Four Loko (because of course it was), the study asked researchers to analyze more than 60,000 Instagram images in 50 U.S. cities, as well as ten cities across the rest of the world.” [Read more](#)

BECAUSE MIAMI — “This ex-cop pretended he was part of Haiti president’s security. He’s in DEA custody,” by **Miami Herald’s Jacqueline Charles:** “He is one of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration’s most wanted fugitives, accused of being a part of a four-man drug ring transporting cocaine into Miami from Port-au-Prince. Now Jean Ednor Innocent, a former Haiti National Police officer who on Monday tried to pass himself off as a

member of Haitian President Jovenel Moïse's presidential security detail in the streets of Port-au-Prince, is in U.S. custody after spending 13 years as a fugitive from the law." [Read more](#)

MONKEY RETURNED! — “Doctor: Monkey stolen from Palm Beach Zoo in good health upon return,” by Palm Beach Post’s Eliot Kleinberg and Olivia Hitchcock:“Doctor G opened the door to a room at the Palm Beach Zoo animal hospital on Wednesday and welcomed in Francisco Maldonado and Steven DePetro, the two police detectives she called her heroes. Inside, sitting calmly in a large cage, was Kali, the tiny 12-year-old rare Goeldi’s monkey whose abduction Monday had drawn national attention.” [Read more](#)

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